# A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION

Saturday, October 26. 1706.

I Am coming now to enquire into that Part of the Queſtion, relating to the Union with *Scotland*, *Viz.* Who ſhall be the better, who ſhall be Gainers by it; and before I go about this on my own Head, I think it cannot be amiſs to give you a better Opinion than mine, and for that I ſhall need to go no farther than the QUEEN Her ſelf.

When the Lords Commiſſioners on either ſide preſented Her Majeſty with the Draught of the Treaty, ſign'd under their Hands, Her Majeſty was pleas'd among other things to expreſs Her ſelf to this Effect, That *the Particulars of the Treaty appear'd ſo reaſonable, and ſo great a Security and Advantage to both Kingdoms; that Her Majeſty would look upon it as a Happineſs to have the Union finiſhed in Her Reign.*

In the QUEEN's Letter to the Parliament of *Scotland*, Her Majeſty has theſe Words of the Union—'That an entire 'and perfect Union will be the ſolid Foun-'dation of a laſting Peace; That it will ſe-'cure our Religon, Liberty, and Property, 'remove the Animoſities among your ſelves, 'and the Jealouſies and Differences between 'the two Kingdoms: That it muſt increaſe 'our Strength, Riches and Trade; and by 'this Union, the whole Iſland being joyned 'in Affection, and free from all Apprehen-'ſions of different Intereſts, will be inabled 'to reſiſt all its Enemies, ſupport the Prote-'ſtant Intereſt every where, and maintain 'the Liberties of *Europe*. That the Union is 'the only Way to ſecure our preſent and fu-'ture Happineſs, and to diſappoint the De-'ſigns of our Enemies, who will doubtleſs

'on

'on this Occaſion, uſe their utmoſt Endea-
'vours to delay or diſappoint this Union,
'which muſt ſo much contribute to our Glo-
'ry, and the Happineſs of our People. *Let-
ter to the Parliament of* Scotland.

After all this ſaid from the QUEEN, I would be glad to ſee ſome of our obſerving Criticks ſhew me a Reaſon, why I, as a poor gifted Brother, may not be allow'd to hold forth upon ſuch a Text, while the more learned and accurate of the ſcribling Tribe, ſcorn to deſcend ſo low.

And to deſcend therefore to the particulars——*It will be the ſolid Foundation of a laſting Peace*, ſays Her Majeſty——Who ſhall be Gainers by this? Or rather who not? Well may the QUEEN ſay, it will be a Happineſs of both Kingdoms. Who are not Gainers by Peace, that have any thing to loſe? —No Men are ſo forward to wiſh the Diſtractions and Diviſions of their native Country, as thoſe, whoſe Fortunes being deſperate, expect to be Gainers by the Spoils of their Neighbours; all thoſe, whoſe Subſtance is worth their Care, will be Friends to the Peace of the Nation.

Men that have Inheritances and Families are tied to the Intereſt and Welfare of their Country, by their indiſſolvible Obligations of Nature and Reaſon; 'tis impoſſible theſe Men can wiſh for any Diſorders, or any Way rejoice in the approaching Miſeries of their Country, without acting againſt themſelves, and ſtabbing the Heart of their own Proſperity.

Nothing can be more grateful to theſe Men, than a ſolid Foundation of a laſting Peace; therein is the Security of what they enjoy, and a Spur to the Induſtry of them and their Families, in order to a farther Increaſe—What Heart can Men have to labour, contrive and execute, when the precarious unſettled Poſture of the Country, they live in, leaves them no room to hope, they ſhall peaceably enjoy the Fruit of their Labour; when their Wealth is at the Mercy of every Rabble, and every tumultuous Breach between Parties as well as Nations, expoſes them and their Eſtates to Ruin and Deſtruction?

Let any Man look back to the Times, when the two Nations, we are ſpeaking of, liv'd in mutual Jealouſies and mutual Animoſities. How was every Quarrel decided by Blood, every Trifle follow'd with Inroades and Devaſtations, every perſonal Family Pique reveng'd upon the Country? The Borders were the Courts of Judicature in a Sort, where the Rights of Families and Nations were tryed by the unequal Deciſion of the Sword.

Never was ſuch a Phaſe of Blood, Robbery, and all Sorts of Cruelty, as the Marches of the two Kingdoms; the Robberies of the *Arabs* on the Deſerts and Paſſages of *Aſia*, are not to be reckon'd with them, nor the *Arabs* themſelves to the Borderers, who on all Occaſions plunder'd Friend and Enemy.

Not the *Banditi* of *Naples*, nor the *Coſſacks* in *Hungary* and *Poland*, came up to our old Bands of Border-Thieves, Moſs-Troopers, and ſuch Monſters, who inhabited between the Nations.

No Wonder the Country lies barren to this Day, which tho' fruitful enough in its Nature, has been only plow'd with the Sword, and fatten'd or manured with the Blood of Men. How frequently do they, now in the Fields on the Borders of each Kingdom, plow up the Bones of Men, and diſcover the miſerable Antiquities of eternal Feuds between the Nations!

What Armies of *Britiſh* Heroes, Legions of *Roman* Soldiers, and thouſands of *Engliſhmen* have been loſt, and are forgotten in the bloody Feuds between theſe two Nations! and if the original Cauſes of all theſe Miſeries were to be examin'd, how trifling, how weak would they be found, compar'd to the Eaſineſs of preventing them!

Had the Nations been originally one, how eaſie had it been for ſuch a united Body to have bid fair for future Conqueſts, and I am perſwaded, the Reputation of the *Engliſh* and *Scots* Forces always conſider'd, *Britain* had always held the Ballance of *Europe*, She had always been the Arbitreſs of the World, and ſat as QUEEN of all the *Northern* Nations!

How fooliſh then has been the Strife between theſe two Siſters? How has it kept them both down, and leſſen'd their Figure in the World? How has it been the Riſe of exorbitant Tyrants in other Nations, both *Auſtrian* and *Gallican*?

What

What Work had *Edward* I. made in the World, a Prince of that Fire in his Soul, and that Fury in his Hand; if, *Scotland* having been united under his Scepter, he had turn'd the whole Force of that collected Body againſt *France*, then grown very great —If it be true, that 300000 Men loſt their Lives on both ſides, in the ſeveral long Wars with *Scotland* during his Reign, what muſt not ſuch a Power, and under ſuch a Captain, have done in the World?

In a Word, nothing has cramp'd the Glory, and kept low the Characters of both theſe Nations, but their implacable Feuds one with another; and who would not deſire Peace between them?

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# MISCELLANEA.

I Have in two particular *Reviews* ſpoken my Mind in the Affair of the Players, by the Authority of the Univerſity erecting their Houſe at *Oxford*, the ill Conſequence of which I have ſeriouſly recommended to the Univerſity to conſider of.

Whether they have been pleas'd to think it worth their while or no; or how far they have one way or other acted on that Occaſion, I reſerve to future Conſiderations; nor had I ſo ſoon re-aſſum'd that Subject, but for the following ingenious Letter, which I have had by me for ſome time. I forbore to publiſh it hitherto, becauſe of the Compliment paid in the Beginning, to theſe Endeavours of mine; but I conſtrain my ſelf rather to be thought vain enough to be pleas'd with them, than omit the Subſtance of the Letter, which is as follows.

*Give me leave, Sir, as a Friend to Vertue and Religion, to return you Thanks for the great Zeal you have ſhewn againſt the Enemies of both, in expoſing the Wickedneſs of the Stage, and the Folly of thoſe that give Encouragement to it. I aſſure you, Sir, your Deſign is highly approv'd of by ſeveral very worthy Gentlemen, and therefore I hope, you will ſtill purſue it. 'Tis a copious Subject, and not eaſily exhauſted; and as the Ladies, I doubt, are the greateſt Friends to the Playhouſes, it might perhaps be of ſome Uſe to ſpend one or two* Reviews *in an Addreſs to them, who generally ſpeaking are eaſier wrought upon than the Men. I ſhall not pretend to direct you in this Matter, but I believe, it would not be amiſs to take Notice, how little Regard the Players have ſhewn to Her Majeſty's Order for regulating the Stage; ſince (notwithſtanding that) they have continued to act ſome of thoſe very Plays, for which they were ſo juſtly complain'd of before, as well as others equally as ſcandalous——But this I muſt leave to your own Diſcretion, and ſhall take up no more of your Time, but to beg your Pardon for this Trouble, who am,*

Auguſt, 14th, 1706.

Sir,

Yours unknown, &c.

I have hitherto avoided printing theſe Papers at the Plays, for the following Reaſons, among many others.

*Firſt*, Mr. *Collier* had ſo ſignificantly, and as I thought, effectually expoſed them; that I really believ'd, the wiſeſt and ſobereſt of our People of both Sexes would have ſignified their Aſſent to his extraordinary Argument, by diſcouraging their Appearance, till they had pleas'd to reform their Practice.

*Secondly*, I thought, the Players themſelves would have been ſo ingenuous, as to have corrected thoſe Errors, which muſt make them odious to wiſe Men, and ſometime or other expoſe them to the publick Indignation.

*Thirdly*, I thought, the Perſecutions they have been under for Blaſphemy and Prophaneneſs, and thoſe that ſtill threaten them on the ſame Heads, might have reduced them to ſome Pitch of Modeſty, leſs fatal to our Youth, and leſs deſtructive to good Manners, and our labour'd Reformation.

And I